

a complicated and subtle fastidiousness, something "languid and alert" and modern, yet dark, brooding, and predestined to tragedy. The technical skill with which the scroll of her past is pressed through the tortured aperture of her memory is admirable. Yet though Peacey, her lover's butler, is in appearance and psychology convincing, and Miss West brings all her most persuasive skill to bear in explaining Marion's marriage to him and his subsequent assault, we are not really carried over the threshold of credulity; consequently Roger, with his Russian combination of feebleness and transcendent love, never becomes much more to us than a ghost, although Marion's and Richard's reactions to the ghost appear always as authentic.

One is, however, movingly convinced of Marion's own tragic suicide. It is in the essence of her character, and the scene in which she looks for the last time through the window of her home is charged with some of the mysterious, haunting quality of "The Turn of the Screw." In fact, every time this woman appears one is sensible of that heightening of emotional tension which an actor whose art has achieved genius produces in one whenever he comes on the stage. When, however, after her death Richard, goaded suddenly in the midst of his tortured memories into killing Roger, thus realizes Marion's most secret apprehensions, we remain incredulous. The ghost of Roger receives the ghost of a knife. Ellen and Richard have been the victims of an illusion. And in the very end of the book where Ellen is made to reflect on the bitterness of the "two human tendencies: the insane sexual caprice of men, and the not less mad excessive steadfastness of women," we suspect that Miss West has permitted a personal cry to obtrude somewhat feverishly in her thesis. For, if we have understood her correctly her entire story has been woven around Richard's tragic passion for his mother and his inability to be unfaithful to it. And the quality of his love for Ellen, before he sees her distorted through the lens of his love for Marion, shows a potentially enduring devotion. His parting demand of her cannot, either, be thought of exactly as a sexual caprice, unless one is to accept woman as the passive or suffering recipient of men's embraces. Is it, perhaps, that Miss West, turning the searchlight of her reason on an unresolved conflict in herself unconsciously reflects the conflict in the form of a conviction?

One regrets a certain teasing and excessive virtuosity which she displays, the coloratura trills so neat and dextrous and irrelevant, obscuring one's appreciation of the long-sustained tones of dark and resonant beauty. Yet, in spite of any deficiency in restraint, or the development of her story, Miss West's genius in this book flows with a luxurious rushing intensity informing every sentence with the shimmering sapience of her mind.

ALYSE GREGORY

## The World War

*A History of the Great War.* By John Buchan. Four volumes. Houghton Mifflin Company. \$20.

WHEN the authoritative history of the World War makes its appearance fifty or a hundred years from now it will in all likelihood be the work not of one man but of many. No individual, be he gifted with the industry of a Gibbon or a Rhodes and the editorial and assimilative capacity of many Rankes and Lord Actons, will be able to encompass in a scholar's brief productive lifetime the tremendous body of material that shall have accumulated on the most gigantic conflict the world has ever seen.

One man equipped with the best of tools can in a lifetime level a hillside; he can at best only scratch the surface of a mountain. The increasing number of cooperative historical works is but the recognition of this physical fact as applied to the writing of history. And as the sources grow more numerous this tendency is bound to become more marked. The great historian of the future will, in fact, primarily be a great editor.

Such individual works as that of John Buchan's serve their

purpose, however. They summarize in an effective fashion the facts already revealed, unifying them into one coherent whole.

Mr. Buchan served as liaison officer with the British troops in France during the early days of the war. Later he held the position of Director of Information in the British Foreign Office. Through his hands there passed the reports of British agents, military and civil, from all over the world. He was thus in an unusually advantageous position to report the war, although, as he is at pains to explain, no confidences were violated and no secret archives disturbed when he wrote the book. In this he appears to have been more scrupulous than some of his superiors now rushing to print with their revelations.

Writing from the patriotic British point of view, Mr. Buchan does not gloss over the mistakes of his countrymen, whether it be the failure to appreciate the true meaning of the Somme offensive or the persecution of conscientious objectors. Nor does he ever minimize the contributions of his country's allies or the valor of the enemy.

"As the skies darkened above her," he writes of Germany, "and the number and the armaments of her enemies increased to a fatal preponderance, she rose to a greatness which had been wanting in her first magniloquent dreams. Her people suffered extreme hardships patiently, and did not break until they were assured of defeat. Her armies showed both individually and in the mass the utmost valor and resolution. It was no contemptible foe that yielded on 11th November."

The chapters on Russia and the Russian revolution are perhaps the least satisfactory in the book. Like so many others he had been a firm believer in the idea that the Russian masses were enthusiastic for the war, a belief dictated more by his hopes than by the facts. He had written in one of the volumes of the Nelson history that form the basis of the present work: "From the start the nation had been united. The campaign had been a popular one beyond any in her history. It had been recognized by every class as a struggle not only for national existence, but for the essential ideals of civilization and humanity." That may have sounded all right in 1916 but it has a hollow ring now.

In discussing the revolution itself, the author appears to be swayed first by his repugnance for the "dreamers of the Smolny, drunk with vainglory" and most responsible for Russia's terrible state, and a feeling that after all the Russian debacle was the inevitable outcome of long-continued conditions and that "no tinkering or welding could save the fabric. Russia must go into the furnace to be saved anew."

In describing the military phases of the war Mr. Buchan is perhaps at his best. While he does not condone the most glaring mistakes made by the Allies he is charitable to the individuals most responsible for these mistakes, taking the position that in modern warfare the factor of luck is too deeply involved to blame any one too harshly. He is thus generous to Sir John French after the latter's costly blunder at Third Ypres and to Nivelle whose tactical mistakes after the Somme prevented the end of the war in the spring of 1917 instead of in the fall of 1918. He is more vigorous in his criticism of the governments of France and Great Britain who needlessly interfered with their generals. "They chose to regard the Somme as a failure," he writes, "and ignorant of the mercies vouchsafed to them, declined to reap the fruit of an indisputable success. Nivelle offered a brilliant gamble; but in accepting it they rejected a sober and certain victory. The French debacle of May, the horrors of the Third Ypres, Caporetta, and the final downfall of Russia, the 1918 retreat from the Somme, the Lys, and the Aisne may be implicit in that fatal decision."

In discussing the position of the United States Mr. Buchan gives a faithful account of the circumstances that led us into war, although he gives too much credit to the Wilson Administration for far-seeing statesmanship. For some unexplained reason he finds no place in his work for any account of the internal situation in the United States after the declaration of war.

BARNET NOVER

## Government Analyzed

*The State.* By Franz Oppenheimer. Translated by John M. Gitterman. Second American edition. B. W. Huebsch, Inc. \$2.

LIKE the light and the air, government is taken as matter-of-course. Sometimes this or that form or mode of government comes under popular scrutiny, and occasionally changes are effected by exercise of the popular will, as, e.g., from autocracy to constitutionalism, or from constitutional monarchy to republicanism; but government itself—that is to say, the state as an historical phenomenon—is seldom regarded in the light of a *corpus vile* for dissection and research. Mr. Oppenheimer has in this small volume carried on to a conclusion the work of the late Professor Gumpлович of Graz, in considering the history and development of the state, from its earliest rudimentary appearances down through its various differentiations and integrations to its present highly organized form. He does not follow the a priori or speculative method which all English and American writers on the state have invariably followed, from Bentham and Locke to Carey and Woodrow Wilson. His method is purely historical and sociological (in the Continental use of the term, not in ours) and therein lies its greatest merit.

Though short, it is a hard book to read, requiring a high degree of concentration and some constructive imagination unless one be prepared for it, say, by acquaintance with the fundamental economics of the Physiocrats. But it is quite proper to say that at just this stage in the progress of public affairs, both in this country and in Western Europe, there is no book current which approaches it in practical value to a reader; for it enables him to answer for himself a number of questions which are just now pressing for answer, with uncommon definiteness and force.

For example, more than ever before, probably, people are wondering at the disparity between the moral code which the state enforces upon the individual and that which itself accepts. The state represses private murder; yet itself organizes murder on a colossal scale. It represses private robbery; yet it organizes robbery at wholesale upon weaker communities. It represses private theft; yet it organizes theft into a quite elaborate system in its own behalf and that of its beneficiaries, through tariffs and various forms of indirect taxation. It is a legitimate matter of wonder that, as Principal Jacks points out in the February issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, the most important and conspicuous examples of anarchy are today furnished by the state, which, nevertheless, is rigorous to the point of silliness in repressing anarchistic tendencies in individuals. A thoughtful person must wonder, too, at the invariable disposition of the state to act against the general interests and in favor of the special interests, and at the enormous amount of pressure that must invariably be brought to bear upon the state before it will forgo this disposition—e. g., in the matter of so-called "welfare legislation."

There is no more valuable service, clearly, than to put a reader in the way of giving a competent answer to questions like these, and Mr. Oppenheimer's book does just that. By observing what the nature of the state is, what its origins were, and what has been the course of its development, the reader can perceive at once that the phenomena of the modern state which give rise to such questions are logical and to be expected. He becomes aware, furthermore, of the course which history indicates that he should follow, the tendencies in society with which he should cooperate, in order to effect the transformation of the state—or, strictly speaking, its disappearance.

It is an interesting testimony to the quality of academic freedom under "Prussian autocracy" that after publishing this book Mr. Oppenheimer held without trouble his place in the University of Berlin, and only left it when, during the war, he was called to a higher place as professor of political science in the University of Frankfurt.

ALBERT JAY NOCK

## Books in Brief

*The East Wind.* By Hugh MacNair Kahler. G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$2.

Unusually well-written thesis stories from the *Saturday Evening Post*, embodying a conservative's *cave* against social, intellectual, and moral discontent.

*Peradventure.* By Robert Keable. G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$2.

The irrepressible author of "Simon Called Peter" discovers religious doubt.

*Star of Earth.* By Morris Dallett. Alfred A. Knopf. \$1.50.

Short, colorful romance of South American revolution. For the admirers rather of Joseph Hergesheimer than of Richard Harding Davis.

*The Church on the Avenue.* By Helen Martin. Dodd, Mead and Company. \$2.

How a small-town minister comes into conflict with village magnates. Thoughtful in the working out, but rather bare as fiction.

*Rube.* By G. A. Borgese. Authorized translation by Isaac Goldberg. Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$2.

Elaborate analysis of the neurotic intellectual in Italy before, during, and after the war.

*The Girl Next Door.* By Lee Wilson Dodd. E. P. Dutton and Company. \$2.

An interesting character dragged into a preposterous and far too "whimsical" story.

*Picture Frames.* By Thyra Samter Winslow. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.

Sophisticated stories about simple people. The milieu of O. Henry and the philosophy of the *Smart Set*.

*Falsifications of the Russian Orange Book.* Edited by Baron G. von Romberg. B. W. Huebsch. \$1.

At last this extraordinary revelation of Entente deceit appears in English. The full text of the correspondence between the Russian Foreign Office and the Russian Ambassador at Paris in July, 1914, compared with the text as published in 1914, reveals the deliberate deception of the world in 1914. The book was reviewed in *The Nation* last December.

*Comparative History, 1878-1914.* By the ex-Emperor of Germany. Translated by F. Appleby Holt. Robert M. McBride and Company. \$3.

A translation of the comparative historical tables reviewed in *The Nation* last October, which show the ex-Kaiser as earnest and as poor an historian as M. Poincaré himself. This edition is adorned with sixteen pictures of Wilhelm and his royal friends, and suffers by sacrifice of the tabular form of presentation.

## Drama Actresses

A LATE spring and many plays and a general sense of weariness and disillusion. Can this jaded place be the theater? The plays seem empty, the acting mere antics. All that is festive is gone. Do the very lights burn dim? The cleverest scenery turns to lathe, lanterns, canvas, tawdry and inchoate. You close your eyes and see a favorite hill, a remembered bend of shore-line. But disillusion has its deceptions too. If suddenly, on one of these evenings, the curtain were to rise on greatness, humanity, energy, resonance—we should all recover at once what now seems irrecoverable and find in some dusty playhouse mountains, shore, and sea.

Even Mr. Clayton Hamilton, I imagine, will stint the assurance of his praise at the latest play of Sir Arthur Wing Pinero. Pinero had, at his best, a certain adroitness and energy as a